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Igor Youskevitch in *The Nutcracker* pas de deux

(*Photo:* Alfredo Valente)

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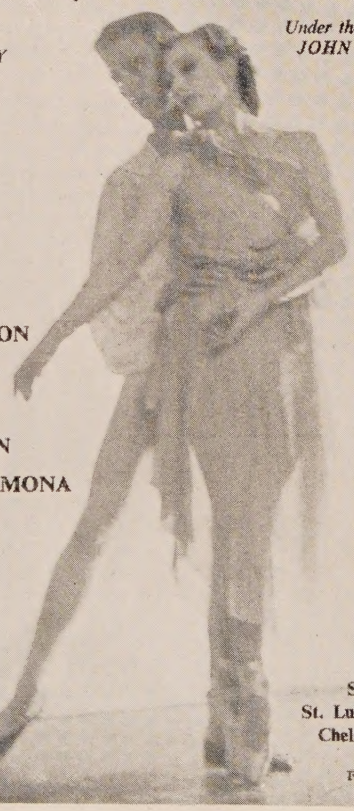

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July, 1950 Vol. I. No. 7

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS

Published monthly on the 25th of the month preceding date of issue and is obtainable of all newsagents and booksellers by giving a firm order or by postal subscription : Post free terms. Single copies 1/2. Half year 7/-. $1.00 or Frs. 350. One year 14/-, $2.00 or Frs. 700.

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MERSEY HOUSE, 132-4, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

PERFORMANCES can be moving for one of two reasons—their implication of their sublimity. The coming-of-age Gala at Sadler's Wells on May 15 implied a great deal to those of us in the audience who have watched the company grow from an ill-nourished, scorned bud to full-flowering achievement—in the winking-of-an-eye that is twenty-one years. All due to the untiring energy and perseverance of Ninette de Valois.

As the curtain rose on *Wedding Bouquet*, there she stood as Webster the maid; the audience rose too. While trying to express our gratitude for everything she had done, I wondered what was passing through her mind as she stood there. Perhaps she was thinking of the early days when she was taking curtain calls as one of the principal dancers to applause just as great as she was receiving on this evening, but from the happy few who always had faith in the company. She and we have travelled a long road since then and now the applause of we, the original few, symbolises the approbation of most of the ballet-loving world. Perhaps on the other hand, she was only thinking of whether her cap was straight. But a certain telepathy must have conveyed to her the affection we all feel.

It was right that this happy family party should have been held in the nursery and not in the more formal drawing-room that has only associated with the company's adolescence. Now that it has reached man's estate it was all the more remarkable that the original carefree rapture was, for one night, completely recaptured. And if anyone who was not there, thinks that this was merely a sentimental occasion they are quite wrong. It was a night of great performances.

The programme opened with *Haunted Ballroom* with Fonteyn in the first role she ever played with the company—The Young Treginnis. Never before have I realised that this could be a role at all. Fonteyn really made you believe in this young frightened boy with a knowledge of inevitable doom. It was good too to see Helpmann back as the Master of Treginnis, which needs his maturity; our young dancers, good though they are, can never quite achieve the depth of characterisation that only comes with experience. The ballet only lacked the presence of Alicia Markova in the role that bears her name. Nobody since has realised its many subtleties.

The second ballet, Ashton's *Wedding Bouquet* regained everything it has lost on big stages. Helpmann's dapper and fickle Bridegroom has always been his best role and again after eleven years we could see how touching Fonteyn could be as the forsaken and forlorn Julia. June Brae is the only Josephine who should not attend a wedding. Everyone was glad to see Mary Honer back as the trusting Bride.

The orgy scene from *Rake's Progress* again was the rout of Hogarthian trollops with Ursula Moreton as the most abandoned of the lot and Walter Gore decaying as decadently as at the first performance in 1935.

Oddly enough it was the evergreen *Facade* that did not seem to gain by having its near-original cast. Perhaps because it is just as well danced by the young entry at Sadler's Wells and Ballet Rambert.

It may be wrong to comment in any way on the dancing during this remarkable evening as it was more of an occasion than a performance; to be looked at through the cold critical quizzing-glass. There were a lot of people in the audience who have only recently become regulars at Sadler's Wells who were astounded at the life put into the old ballets. Old ballets they are now, and the foundation of a great English tradition.

★

In Copenhagen, where I am writing at the moment, the ballet is steeped in tradition. The continuous breeze from the Baltic gives a feeling of preservation so that works first given a hundred and sixty-four years ago appear as fresh as if they were created only yesterday. Should they ever be taken away from this beautiful city they would probably wilt and fade. The summer season of the Royal Danish Ballet is designed to show a cross section of a varied repertoire dating from 1786 to the present day. The axis upon which everything revolves is—August Bournonville, this remarkable man was creating ballets here at the Royal Theatre in the middle of the last century, ballets in which the male dancer was as important as the ballerina. This at a time when the rest of the world had banished man from the ballet except in the humiliating role of *porteur*.

Only a state supported theatre could afford to preserve these works with such loving care, and that is its principal function. Other companies can try the new and experimental, but a National Theatre should be a museum—and museums can be very exciting.

Cover Story

This month's cover is of Maria Tallchief, prima ballerina of the New York City Ballet, partnered by Francisco Moncion in *Firebird*, photographed by American photographer Walter Owen. The choreography of this ballet is by George Balanchine; the scenery and costumes originally designed for Ballet Theatre, are by Marc Chagall. The score was composed by Stravinsky in 1910. London audiences will see *Firebird* when the New York City Ballet comes to Covent Garden this month.

The first production of *Firebird* (L'Oiseau de Feu) a ballet in one act and two scenes was given by Michel Fokine at the Theatre National de l'Opera, in Paris, June 25, 1910. It had scenery and costumes by Golovine and the same Stravinsky score.

The leading role, the Bird of Fire, as it was then called, was danced by Thamar Karsavina, Michel Fokine was Ivan Tsarevich, Enrico Cecchetti was Köstchei, the Immortal and Vera Fokina, The Beautiful Tsarevna.

The ballet was based on an adaptation of the Russian fairy tales—*The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, The Bird of Light and The Grey Wolf* and the legend of *Kötchei*, the enchanter, whose soul was hidden in an egg.

Diaghilev originally commissioned Lyadov to compose the music but the composer could not complete the score in time so the commission was withdrawn and given to a promising young composer named Igor Stravinsky.

About the dancers on the cover; Maria Tallchief was born in Fairfax, Oklahoma in 1925 and is part Indian. She is the wife of choreographer George Balanchine and the elder sister of Marjorie Tallchief, ballerina of the de Cuevas Ballet. Educated in California, she began her dance studies with Ernest Belcher and later studied with Bronislava Nijinska and David Lichine.

A member of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo from 1942 to 1947, she created the roles of Coquette in *Night Shadows*, Unidentified Lady on Horseback in *Virginia Sampler* and the Danse Indienne in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. She has danced leading roles in *Ballet Imperial, Serenade, Les Sylphides, Baiser de la Fée, Gaité Parisienne* (Can-Can Dancer), *Chopin Concerto* and *Scheherazade* (Zobeide). During the summer of 1947 she was guest artist at the Opéra in Paris, after which she returned to New York as ballerina for Ballet Society, now the New York City Ballet.

Francisco Moncion was born in La Vega, Dominican Republic and received his dance training at the School of American Ballet in New York. He has appeared in productions of the New Opera Company (1942); in a revival of *The Merry Widow* (1943-44) that had choreography by George Balanchine and Ballet International in the autumn of 1944. In the latter company he achieved great success in the title role of Edward Caton's ballet *Sebastian*. He also created the role of the Husband in Antonio Cobos' ballet *Mute Wife*. He has appeared with the Original Ballets Russes as guest artist in 1946, and as soloist in a revival of the operetta *Chocolate Soldier* in 1947. Since then he has been a member of Ballet Society.

Contributors

JEAN LAURENT is a Parisian dance critic, who has sponsored recitals for unknown dancers some of whom are now world famous. He writes about the Spanish dancers in Paris (page 9).

PHILLIP BLOOM is Press Representative for New York City Ballet. On page 7 he introduces you to the personalities in that company who will be our summer visitors to Covent Garden from July 10 for six weeks.

JOHN PERCIVAL is the assistant secretary of the Oxford University Ballet Club as well as one of the editors of *Arabesque*, the club's magazine. This month he writes about the choreography of Roland Petit (page 7).

EVAN SENIOR is our regular music critic. This month he writes about the commissioning of music for the ballet, on the ballet in Milhaud's new opera, and on a young Dutch composer whose ballet score we are soon to hear in this country (page 17).

The Yanks are coming . . .

A "WHO'S WHO" OF NEW YORK CITY BALLET

by Phillip Bloom

AT eight o'clock one May evening the company of the New York City Ballet gathered in its rehearsal rooms at the School of the American Ballet for official information regarding its forthcoming début at Covent Garden.

As I listened to Kirstein, Balanchine and Robbins impart facts and give suggestions, I watched the bright, youthful faces of the dancers reacting to the explanation of English customs and to what would be expected of them as members of the great world of the ballet.

Balanchine explained the difference in money values. 'Eeenglish moneeee eeesss . . . verree beeg ond . . . so," as he demonstrated with his hands, and the group laughed. Infinitely more eloquent with movement than with words, George's explanations were punctuated with incompleted sentences, humorous gestures of despair and continual pleas for rescue by other members of the staff.

Scarcely two years old, New York City Ballet is the youngest ballet company in America. Its activities have been limited so far to four seasons in the City Center, as part of the family of the New York City Center of Drama and Music. There has been no touring, approximately four weeks of rehearsal before each season, and a number of the dancers have, at the completion of each session, joined other companies as guest artistes, worked in musicals or on television. Thus we are far from crystallised as a working group. Nevertheless the personality of the Company is vivid already, result of Balanchine's presence, of Lincoln Kirstein's quiet, persistent drive, and of the point of view of all the dancers.

During Frederick Ashton's recent visit to the company to choreograph *Les Illuminations*, he found the company's dancers "less disciplined" than those of the Sadler's Wells company but "more electric, more rhythmic", wondering whether this was caused by the diet, the climate, or both.

Perhaps due somewhat to the extrovert American personality, inherent in all the company's dancers, be they from Toronto, Canada (Melissa' Hayden), Chihuahua, Mexico (Nicholas Magallanes), Medford Oregon (Janet Reed) or the Osage Indian Reservation in Oklahoma (Maria Tallchief). It is a fundamental sense of the theatre which they all possess, personified, perhaps, by the associate artistic director, Jerome Robbins.

Robbins has spent much of the past seven years in musical comedy in New York, where he was responsible for a series of dances which in themselves brought "smash hit" labels to the musicals in which they appeared. He has also demonstrated his talents as choreographer and dancer with his *alma mater*, Ballet Theatre, for which he created *Interplay*, *Facsimile* and *Fancy Free*. He joined the New York City Ballet Company last year, and now stands in the front rank of American choreographers and dancers.

The extrovert personality which is a feature of all the dancers belongs particularly to Jerome Robbins, as a performer and choreographer, but *not* as a person.

A slim, dark, nervous young man, he is the antithesis of the word. He seems to have reached out to Auden's poem, "The Age of Anxiety", for his latest work, and has painted in his ballet the search for happiness, the struggle with personal emotions and the overwhelming sense of the futility of life.

Robbins is an acutely aware young man, an indefatigable worker as well as creative and clear-sighted in his choreographic concepts.

Melissa Hayden was there, her dark wavy hair falling loosely about her neck. Melissa had been with Ballet Theatre and with Ballets Alicia Alonso before joining this company. When she danced the première performance of William Dollar's *The Duel* her portrayal of the girl warrior was a bravura performance which brought the audience to its feet. Two weeks later she appeared in *Les Illuminations* and gave a performance of wild and pagan character, as "Profane Love".

Lois Ellen of the New York City Ballet

"Tanny" was sitting next to her on the long wooden bench. Tanaquil LeClerq, who on stage resembles a beautiful butterfly lazily testing its wings with the instinctive grace of the thing, but with some angularity that is both naive and endearing. In *Les Illuminations* she danced "Sacred Love" and she seemed indeed that. Attired in white by Cecil Beaton, with billowing skirt and elongated headpiece, she moved around the stage in a mist of purity, a lovely image surviving in the midst of brutality, despair and self-destruction. In *Bourrée Fantasque*, which England will also see, Tanny danced in a way which one critic described as "lusty with a halo". She boasts a mixture of qualities resembling adolescent vigour and impishness, combined with angelic innocence which keep her audiences on the alert.

Down the bench sat "the two Indians", as they are affectionately called—Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes. Indians they are, indeed, although only partly so. Maria is the granddaughter of the Osage Chief, Big Heart, but left the Reservation at the age of nine, and has only been back on several occasions to visit her grandmother. She began her training in a California dancing school and now has climaxed those years of training with a *Firebird* that is brilliant, one of such proportions as to give the company its best notices to date. This tall, olive-complexioned girl, who is called in turn "fabulous", "elegant", "poignant", "perfect", is all that, with a technique that is breathtaking, and a stage style and demeanour that are regal. Off-stage? A determined poker player who can hold her own with any male player. But she is completely relaxed and amiable, and at first glance would impress you as one whose life is devoted to the dance.

Nicholas Magallanes, the other "Indian", is Maria's closest friend in the company, and on most occasions, her partner. Nicky is a sloe-eyed Mexican boy, lean and dark, with a cloak of seeming languor covering an exciting dance personality. Magallanes' range is such that he dances the title role in Balanchine's *Orfeo* and Ashton chose him for the title role in *Les Illuminations*, in which he dances the erotic, self-immolating Rimbaud. Previously he has worked with Ballets Alicia Alonso, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and Ballet Society, the group which preceded the New York City Ballet Company.

A small pale girl with carrot-coloured hair pulled away from her freckled face and drawn up on top of her head in a loose bun was standing in the doorway. At first glance she would not be recognised as the heroine of Todd Bolender's *Mother Goose*, and certainly not the radiant little personality of the hit Broadway musical *Look Ma, I'm Dancing*. She is, of course, Janet Reed, one of the popular dancers on the American stage today, and also among the most versatile. She has a range from the true classic to the serio-comic, and was seen to her best advantage this year when Balanchine created *Pas de Deux Romantique* for her and her partner, Herbert Bliss.

The third "Indian" waved from across the room. Francisco Moncion, from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Tall and leonine, Frank is one of the strongest dancers in the company, his body standing like a pillar of dignified power for his dancing partners. Moncion was scheduled for a career as an aeronautical engineer when he became enchanted with Balanchine's choreography in a film. It was then the possibility of becoming a dancer entered his mind for the first time. Some time later when a friend suggested he apply to the School of the American Ballet for lessons, Moncion discovered that it was the Balanchine school and his aeronautical engineering career went quietly out of the window.

Herbert Bliss, another of the principal dancers, came to the company through a chance attendance at a performance in Kansas City when Ballet Caravan was on tour. Meeting Lincoln Kirstein backstage he asked for an audition, and was urged to continue taking lessons and to come to New York to pursue a career. A few seasons later Herbert won the Ballet Society Award (it was awarded twice, second time to Tanaquil LeClerq).

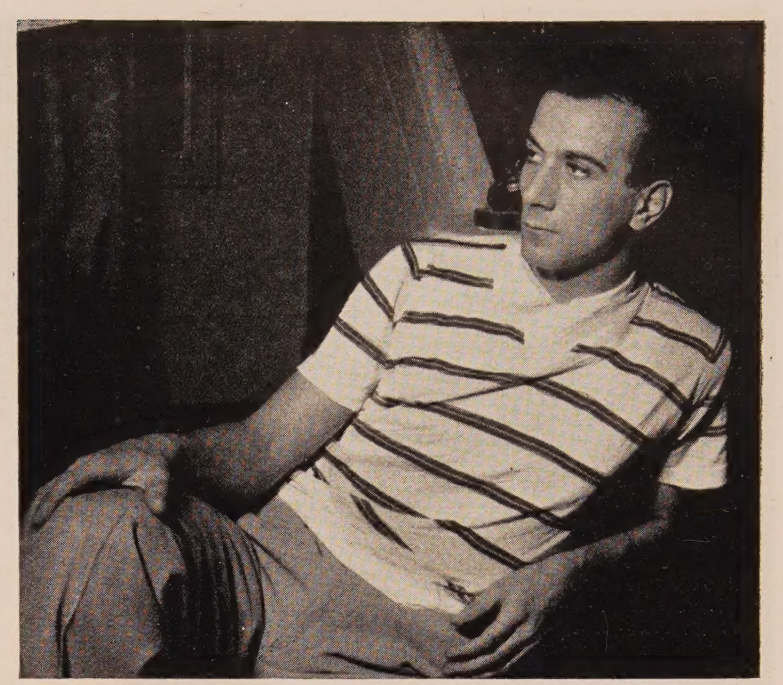
One of the real personalities within the company is vivacious and humorous Beatrice Tompkins. Beatrice comes from a family in which everyone is busy in one form of the arts or another.

Guided by George Balanchine, who is called by his fellow director, Lincoln Kirstein "the Mozart of choreographers", the company is hoping to bring to England that eagerness, vitality and abundance of *joie de vivre* that has helped set us on the road to success.

ROLAND PETIT

Sensationalism or Significance?

Roland Petit is, in many ways, a very fortunate young man. Since the first, warmly acclaimed arrival of Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées in London four years ago, he has had the opportunity to show more new works here than any other choreographer. While other young men of promise have waited eagerly, and sometimes in vain, for the chance to make a new ballet, Petit's works have been danced in three continents by three different companies. They have aroused everywhere both enthusiasm and dislike. Few would deny that he has shown considerable talent and even greater promise, but his promise will be fulfilled and his reputation justified only if certain faults present with the undoubted virtues in his work are recognised and eliminated.



A new portrait of Roland Petit whose first creation for an English company, Ballabile, *had its premiere at Covent Garden on May 5. Previously he had only worked for French companies —Les Ballets des Champs - Elysées and his own Ballet de Paris.*

(Photo: Lido)

IT will be as well, to dismiss some fairly widespread misconceptions about his choreography. It has often been said, for instance, that Petit is more intensely concerned with contemporary life than most other choreographers. There is, however, little evidence of this in his works. *Le Rendezvous* and *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* are, indeed, given a contemporary setting, and the original conception of each of them seems to derive, to some extent, from a fashionable philosophy, but neither is really concerned to portray the life or manners of the day. The one is effective as melodrama of a high quality, mixed with some rather muddled symbolism; the other is chiefly valuable as a magnificent showpiece for the two outstanding dancers for whom it was created. Both these ballets, incidentally, reveal Petit's predilection for symbolic or mythological characters, such as Death, Fate, classical gods or the Devil, which occur repeatedly in his work.

by JOHN PERCIVAL

It seems also to be widely considered that Petit is greatly influenced by the individual qualities of the dancers with whom he is working, adapting his ideas very largely to exploit their abilities. That he should do so to some extent is probable and desirable, since it would be foolish to ignore the potentialities of the human material at his disposal. Naturally, too, he would cast a work with care and possibly with a special gift for recognising unsuspected qualities in a dancer, and in considering a new ballet for his own company he would choose a theme and treatment suited to the dancers available. But that he is not merely opportunist in his work, relying on the personality and technical tricks of his stars, is shown by the consistency of his style, the persistence of distinguishing traits in his work. Alexander Grant's variation, for instance, at the beginning of the Street Scene in *Ballabile*, resembles more closely the dance Petit gave himself in *Les Forains* than any of Grant's own characteristic parts.

Nor is it true to imagine that Petit excels only in the creation of dances for men, although with artists like Babilée, Algaroff, Hamilton—and the boys from the Sadler's Wells corps-de-ballet—to perform his works, it is natural that the male element should often make the greatest impression. But that he can create a ballet in which the female role predominates is proved by *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* and *Carmen*. Again, because the steps of his ballets rarely follow the beat of the music, he is often regarded as "unmusical", whereas in fact his dances are usually fitted to the musical phrase, and he shows at times a considerable gift for catching the spirit of the music: the essentially romping, pseudo-Spanish nature of Chabrier's *Espana*, or the bright, superficial pomposity of the Toreador's entrance in *Carmen*.

Petit's main strength as a choreographer seems to lie in the presentation of an essentially dramatic theme. A brilliant flair for theatrical effect manifests itself in much of his work: the entrances of his principal characters, for instance, are often remarkably effective. This may be seen most vividly by comparing the markedly different but equally striking first entrances of the three principal characters in *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit:* the hesitant arrival of the Musician, the sudden illuminating appearance of Agathe, and the flamboyant but sinister entry of the Cat-Baron. Petit does not rely heavily on mime; his dramatic themes are presented with *variations*, *pas-de-deux* and *ensembles*, and he secures many of his dramatic effects by contrasts. Thus, the tragedy of the doomed young man who is the hero of many of his works is brought out by contrasting the dancing of a pair of young lovers, wrapped up in each other physically and emotionally, with the prowling of mysterious self-centred cat-figures, or with the glaring, blaring gaiety of a gypsy troupe. Petit's comparative lack of success with comedy ballets arises not so much from any inability to create burlesque or comic dances or gay ensembles, as from a failure to supply this very element of contrast, as well as from a certain obviousness, a hearty schoolboy quality in his sense of humour.

Petit is a prolific choreographer, and can become a great one, but he has not achieved any significant progress of late. His best ballets are still some of the earliest shown to us by the Ballets des Champs-Elysées. Since then he has revealed himself to be full of ideas—often very clever or amusing ideas—about ballet; but the more humble, conscientious approach to his art which might have transferred them successfully to the stage, each adding to the development of his talent, has often been lacking.

As Jupiter disguised as the swan that came to Leda, in his Les Amours de Jupitre. *This fine work with Ibert music and Jean Hugo décor, was first seen in London when Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées came to the Adelphi in* 1946.

(Photo: Mandinian)

Spanish Dancers in Paris

ROSARIO and ANTONIO

THE international season of dance has started at the Sarah-Bernhardt Theatre in Paris. While waiting for the Ballet Rambert and Martha Graham's company we have seen again with great pleasure Rosario and Antonio. The two dancers are sometimes called "The Aristocrats of the Dance", and sometimes "The Kids". Truthfully "The Kids" are now twenty-eight but they have always kept the name since they first started dancing at the age of six in Seville.

Since that time they have never separated. They both went to America for ten years where they had a big success. Rosario and Antonio are not married, they are not brother and sister, neither are they lovers, or even cousins. Rosario married a Cuban, but divorced him not very long ago. Her son, who is now eight, is in a Spanish school. For twenty-two years they have been together and they make a perfect couple on the stage. Their dances are very different and even to those who know nothing about dancing are extremely attractive. It is the same with Spanish music, you do not need to be a great musician to understand and appreciate it.

by JEAN LAURENT

A public used to the manly and precise style of Escudero or José Greco might be upset by the sensual seduction of these Flamenco dancers. But Rosario and Antonio have rhythm in their veins. The way Antonio plays with his heels is remarkable; in a simple *Zapateado* he can accomplish beautiful sounds. It is not like the tapping of a hammer, but a full orchestra. He is able to change the tempo of the music, one moment light and gentle, the next violent.

Rosario does not look for the easy and frequently vulgar style of many Spanish dancers who are often drunk by the rhythm of castanets and heel taps. Her intelligence is stronger than her instinct, her art is made of delicate and natural taste.

Their dances inspired by Peruvian folklore and their *Viva Navarra* are masterpieces of grace which could only be achieved by dancers with a classic background. Almost without touching the floor they bring gaiety and exciting rhythm to popular dances. Keeping to the tradition of the Spanish dance, Rosario and Antonio are better each year.

TERESA and LUISILLO

Teresa and Luisillo came from Carmen Amaya's company where their personal success aroused the jealousy of Carmen and her brothers and sisters. They had a chance to have their first performance in Paris and they formed in three weeks a company of their own with twenty-two dancers. Their means were small but the group is sympathetic by its sincerity and naïveté. They were unlucky with their orchestra who had little feeling of rhythm, specially unfortunate for the music of Spain.

Unable to dance *Le Tricorne* in Paris, Teresa and Luisillo had to cut this famous ballet with rather disappointing results, though the *ferruca* danced by Luisillo was full of life.

The best parts of the programme are those when Teresa and Luisillo dance the numbers which brought them so much success with Carmen Amaya, namely *El Relicario* and Rimsky Korsakoff's *Capriccio Espangole*. What comes out of Luisillo is the perfect possession of movement. In all his compositions he is delicate and has a juvenile eagerness.

In *El Relicario* the two dancers enact the lyrics of the song that tells the story of a famous bull-fighter who meets a girl and proudly lays his cloak at her feet, declaring: "The part of my cloak on which your foot has rested shall become a holy keepsake for me." Luisillo's dancing in *El Relicario* reminds one of the great Spanish bull-fighter, Manolete, by whom he was no doubt inspired.

The choreography in *Capriccio Espangole* is not unlike that to Lecuona's *Malaguena*. It is full of subtle passes, caresses and conflicts.

Their scenery is sober and in good taste, their costumes are glistening. For the first time at the head of their own company Teresa and Luisillo are more careful than Carmen Amaya, they do not appear to have engaged anybody who would have a greater success than themselves. No other personality emerges. They are indeed the unquestionable stars of the company.

Every night at the Sarah-Bernhardt Theatre they cry while kissing each other on the stage and bowing to the applauding public. It is charming though somewhat irritating after a time. (*Photos: Lido*)

Curtain Up!

Ever since we can remember, SVETLANA BERIOSOVA has collected stray animals and nursed them. At one time her house in Kensington was full of cats with various ailments. On her return to Europe to join the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, Svetlana was staying at an hotel famous for housing visiting dancers. One day she came across a pigeon that could not fly, and promptly brought it back to the hotel to nurse it back to an air-borne condition. This led to a great deal of complicated manoeuvring on her part, for the habits of the bird did not coincide with those of human beings. For four days Svetlana had to lock her door and keep the key so that the management should not realise what was happening. One day she opened the window and the pigeon gaily flew away to join its relations in Trafalgar Square—after that the ballerina started to clean up, and the frustrated chambermaid was allowed to resume her normal duties.

★

On London's South Bank
They're erecting a tank.
For a ballet, no doubt,
Called "Lady into Trout!"

★

A WORD TO THE WISE

If you can write a paragraph of brilliance
Although you've really nothing much to say,
Or try to prove a very doubtful viewpoint,
Misquoting famous words of yesterday;
If you can intersperse the lines you're writing
With references to persons long since dead,
Or roll out words of continental flavour
As if they had just come into your head;
If you can justify the wildest statement
By starting it with words like "It is known . . .
Or quote another's sane and balanced theory
And make it sound as if it were your own;
If you sum up a complex, modern ballet
In six or seven lines of florid style,
Or proudly point the influence of some painter——
A fact the audience noticed all the while;
If you can "make your mind up" on some question
By careful listening in the Gallery Bar,
Or eulogise a very well-known artiste
And call it simply "following your star";
If you convince the tyro at the ballet
That all your words should be most carefully weighed,
You'll be a most successful ballet critic——
And, unlike me, you'll probably get paid!

If you can keep your place, when all about you
Are elbowing and pushing in the queue,
If you can listen to pretentious chatter
Yet keep your sense of humour fresh and new;
If you can clap with some discrimination
Between what's really good and what is poor;
Or see a small part danced with animation
And say "This is worth coming for";
If you can use your powers of observation
And sift the critics' views with judgement cold,
If you refrain from following the maxim
That something must be good because it's old;
If you can watch a *Sylphides* without clapping,
The leap in *Spectre* with approving nods;
If you can shun a first night's idle glamour,
And book a season ticket for the Gods;
If you can disregard the plush and glitter
And rivet your attention on the stage,
Discuss technique with calm deliberation
And read the Noverre letters, page by page;
If you can state your views, if asked to give them,
Without a touch of prejudice or fear,
You are the world's most perfect ballet-goer——
And also its most perfect bore, my dear!

★

"MOIRA SHEARER DANCES CARMEN"—News-item.

"It couldn't be clearer,"
Said Miss Moira Shearer,
"That interpreting Bizet
Isn't so easy."

"It's that *je ne sais quoi*
You don't learn at the *barre*
And even red hair
Doesn't help," said Jeanmaire.

★

One of the biggest laughs of recent years was caused by a newspaper in the north which published a photograph of ALICIA MARKOVA. There was nothing funny about the photograph: it was charming. But underneath it, instead of the name of the great ballerina, there was written as bold as brass: "Julian Braunsweg" (Markova's impressario). After this there is no holding Dr. Braunsweg; he never stops doing *pliés* and nobody can keep him away from the *barre*. Soon he will be embarking on a concert tour of his own, in which he plans to give every act of every classic.

★

The news that Covent Garden's director, DAVID WEBSTER, had turned impressario came as a great surprise to everyone. Can it be that close contact with America's ace purveyor of entertainment, Sol Hurok, has infected him? His initial venture will be to present fabulous Martha Graham to this country for the first time. We wish him every success in this new field.

★

Those who are closely connected with the theatre are frequently unaware that people who pay for their seats are sometimes anxious to see and hear the spectacle on the stage. Frequently have we sat behind directors, dancers and designers who carried on long, loud, and animated conversations about faults in a production. Not long ago NINETTE de VALOIS was sitting in the stalls of a theatre commenting volubly to Mary Skeaping, Covent Garden's Ballet Mistress, expressing herself with many gesticulations. Eventually a woman behind her could bear it no longer. Leaning forward she remarked bitterly: "If you don't want to watch the ballet and don't know anything about it, you might at least keep quiet!"

Fonteyn and Ashton rehearse the Tango from Facade *for the Gala at Sadler's Wells Theatre on May 15, the 21st anniversary of the company (Photo: Associated Press)*

When the curtain fell on a first act of *Giselle*, given this season by a popular English ballet company, it was curious to note that after the entire company had taken two curtain calls grouped in traditionally frozen attitudes, mourning the recently defunct form of Giselle —the third and fourth curtains were raised on her prostrate form alone bathed in a pool of neon blue light, obviously implying that no amount of applause could revive this Giselle for the vain purpose of taking a bow.

One was reminded of a performance of this same ballet given about four years ago by Serge Lifar and his Nouveaux Ballets de Monte Carlo at the Cambridge Theatre. At the conclusion of his difficult variation in the second act, when, after a final double turn in the air, he plunges prostrate to the floor, the ovation was so deafening that Lifar, indifferent to plot, raised himself from his presumably grief-stricken pose, acknowledged the applause, flew into the wings, returned to the centre of the stage, bowed once more and to the accompaniment of gradually subsiding hand-claps, carefully resumed his fomer position on the floor.

No sunset on
EMPIRE BALLET
by
PETER WILLIAMS

The Empire, Leicester Square, started its new policy on Boxing Day 1949. In an attempt to make this famous site the "Showplace of the Nation", Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer decided to follow the same lines as their Radio City in New York—to present the feature film and a stage show with ballet as one of the main attractions.

In these pages the ballet has been criticised with a certain amount of mild severity. Prompted no doubt by this, Frank Staff invited me to spend a day with the company so that I could see for myself the conditions under which they have to work. That day revealed many of the obstacles that have to be overcome.

Jeanne Artois and Annette Chappell talk things over between the shows at the Empire

IF you worked in the Empire Ballet your day would be roughly this:

Let us take the dancer first of all, Annette Chappell for instance. Her working day starts at 11.30 in the morning and after she has entered the stage door she is living a life bounded by the four walls that lie between Leicester Square and Lisle Street, until late in the evening. She goes to her dressing-room to prepare for the first show which starts at midday. During each show she probably has three changes of costume as she appears in the opening number, later in the ballet, and then in the finale. When the first show finishes at 1 o'clock she will get about half-an-hour for lunch until the rehearsal period at 1.30 which continues until the second show at 2.45. From 4 o'clock to 5.15 there is a further rehearsal period and at 5.45, the third show. From 7 o'clock to 8.15 she will be free to have dinner. The last show starts at 8.45; and at 10 o'clock Annette will leave the theatre and go home.

This same routine contiunes every day except Sunday, but on the week before a new production she will have to be in the theatre by 9 o'clock in the morning for extra rehearsals on the stage; these last until 11.30 and on the Sunday she will have to rehearse most of the day.

It sounds pretty exhausting, but after the first few weeks the dancers got quite used to it and, oddly enough, there has been very little illness. There is a hospital in the building where they receive medical attention and can lie down if they are not feeling well, between performances. As far as I can see the one great drawback is that there is no way of getting proper food on the premises. Tea, sweet cakes, and sandwiches, in the café are not the ideal diet for a dancer. In time there will be another storey added to the building with a large rehearsal room and canteen. In spite of this rather monotonous day the dancers are happy; the proof being that there has hardly been any change in the company since it started.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER

When it comes to hours, the day of choreographer Frank Staff is very similar to that of the dancers as he frequently understudies for a dancer who is ill, but he has many problems which do not exist for the choreographer in an ordinary ballet company.

The first great problem is the audience. This is no ballet-audience but a collection of people running the whole gamut from super-intelligent to sub-moronic. Each kind of film attracts the audience it deserves—tragedy, light comedy, and swim-suit films have their different following, added to which there are always the people who go to the "pictures" whatever is on. A film audience on the whole does not particularly want to use its brain.

Therefore when Frank is creating a new work he has to consider what sort of audience he is going to get and then strike a happy medium. He also has to be careful not to exhaust his dancers for should their technique be employed to the full it is unlikely that there would be many principals left after a few weeks of four shows a day. On top of this there is the ever-present time factor—two hours a day for three weeks is a very short time to rehearse and create a new work and in that three weeks all the usual palaver that precedes any new production, has to be gone through—costume fittings, lighting rehearsals, orchestral rehearsals, dress rehearsals. None of it made any easier by the fact that it is impossible to use the stage except in the morning and half of Sunday.

THE DESIGNER

The same problems which confront the choreographer are repeated in a milder form for the designers Nat Karson (costumes) and Peter Hoffer (settings). In the small office that he shares with Frank Staff, Peter Hoffer designs at least three full sets for each new production, plus a number of cloths and drop curtains. There is no time to make models in the ordinary way. Sketches have to go straight off to Brunskill and Loveday to be constructed, then on to Alick Johnstone to be painted; the completed sets arrive at the Empire just in time for the dress rehearsal. The key to success in this kind of designing lies in its simplicity, ingenuity and effective use of colour.

Staff has had a tough job, it has not been easy to put over ballet in close proximity with acrobats, jugglers, and streamlined Precision girls—but he is winning through. He frequently hears from people who say that they were never interested in ballet but were forced to see it in order to see the film, now they are getting to like it and go to full-length performances in other theatres.

Noreen Lee, Annette Chappell, Audrey Turner and Moira Tucker (in mirror) put the final touches before going on in Les Sylphides

Frankie and Johnnie were lovers,
Lordy how they could love,
swore to be true to each other
true as the heavens above.
He was her man but he done her wrong.

Johnnie took all that gal's money,
went out to get him some fun,
spent all that cash in the bar room
doing things he shouldn't have done.
He was her man but he done her wrong.

Frankie went down to the bar room,
Looking for her loving guy,
and found that her Johnnie was foolin'
with a gal called Nellie Bly.
He was her man but he done her wrong.

FRANKIE and JOHNNIE

New Ballets

First given at the Empire, Leicester Square, by the Empire Ballet on Monday, May 15, 1950. Choreography, Frank Staff; Music, traditional arranged by George Melachrino; costumes, Nat Karson; setting, Peter Hoffer.

CAST:

Frankie	.. ..	Annette Chappell
Johnnie	.. ..	John Hall
Nellie Bly	.. ..	Noreen Lee

Frankie came back to the bar room,
Took out her six shooter gun,
filled up her Johnnie with bullets
for the things that he had done.
He was her man but he done her wrong.

Bring out your rubber tyred hearses,
Bring out your tired old hacks,
'Cos Johnnie is going to the graveyard
and he ain't never goin' to come back.
He was her man but he done her wrong.

History is punctuated by simple little songs that arise from incidents that have caught popular imagination. Sometimes they are political like the English folk song *Lilliburlero*, sometimes a sordid domestic tragedy like the American *Frankie and Johnnie;* the main purpose being to point some moral. All over America there are different versions of this song but the story and moral are the same—Frankie is a prostitute who only loves one man—Johnnie. She sells herself in order to keep him. He in return is flagrantly unfaithful to her. Finding him one day in the arms of Nellie Bly, she shoots him. And as frequently happens in incidents of this kind, she regrets what she has done and mourns over his dead body.

The story has been used several times before as a ballet, probably the most important being the version by Ruth Page for the Chicago Ballet in 1938. It has also been seen in this country when Walter Crisham danced Johnnie in the Revue, *Better Late*.

This new version by Frank Staff is the best and most suitable work that has yet been given at the Empire. Owing to its success it has been retained for six weeks instead of the usual three.

It is not so much as a dance spectacle that it succeeds but on account of its torpid smoke-laden and gin-swilling atmosphere. Chappell and Hall are very good in the title roles and they impart such passion that people in the front rows have been seen to clutch their seats. The choreography owes a good deal to Petit's *Carmen*.

P. W.

(*Photos: Duncan Melvin*)

Dancers prepare for the ballet. Kenneth Melville puts on a hat while Anne Negus watches
(Photo: Duncan Melvin)

BALLABIL

First given at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garde on Friday, May 5, 1950. Choreography by Roland Peti Music by Chabrier arranged Constant Lambert; Scener and Costumes by Antoni Clavé.

CAST:

Violetta Elvin		Alexander Grant
Anne Negus		Philip Chatfield
Avril Navarre	Anne Heaton	Margaret Dale
Kenneth Macmillan	Kenneth Melville	Gilbert Verno

Guest Conductor: Constant Lambert

Scenes: The dancers prepare for the ballet—A class room—A Sunday on the river—A street in the rain—The Circus on the Green—Impressions of Spain.

MUSIC

I don't think I have ever seen a ballet in which music and movement are less connected than in *Ballabile*. Roland Petit has taken some notice of the string of Chabrier tunes which Constant Lambert strung together so cleverly and conducts even more cleverly. But this is only as to expression of the mood involved. In all other ways the music does one thing, and Petit charges through it like a bull in a china shop to do something that has no connection with it at all.

When the music is gay, so is the choreography; when the mood darkens, so does the mood of the ballet. But that is all. The movement hardly touches the music, except in a few instances such as that exquisite and fleeting moment for Elvin and Chatfield just before the blackout at the end of *A Street In The Rain*—a moment in which time stands still.

Someone once said that ballet is one quarter technique and three quarters good taste. Roland Petit's idea of taste as exemplified in *Ballabile* differs profoundly from mine. And it is a strange thing that whereas French dancers, when they want to be vulgar, can act it naturally and delightfully and to the extent of one hundred per cent, English dancers nearly always seem to carry it to one hundred and fifty per cent. To perform the antics given to the dancers in *Ballabile*, even in accord with the music, requires a sophistication, to which the comparative youth of most of the cast is alien.

The boys and girls romped delightfully in *The Circus on the Green*; mood and music matched splendidly here. Everything would have been a lot better if only they had taken some notice of the careful beat which Constant Lambert so painstakingly gave them. But they calmly ignored it—or was that Roland Petit again? Mr. Lambert, on the night I saw it, even tore the tempo of *Espana* to tatters for them, but to no effect.

And as a summing up of the whole work, the exciting musical ending to *Espana* fell choreographically as flat as the dancers themselves; thank goodness the curtain fell, too, and I could go home.

Evan Senior

CHOREOGRAPHY

There seems to be nothing very new about the choreography of *Ballabile*. In spite of many well known Petit mannerisms (with special reference to *Carmen*), the ballet was too exciting to be considered a reiteration, or even an old formula dressed in a new gown. Such a subtle and atmospheric humour as Petit's cannot be perfunctorily presented and survive.

The *pas de deux* of the two young lovers, danced with sincerity and restrained passion by Violetta Elvin and Philip Chatfield, was at variance with the prevailing mood. This was because of the naturalism of the choreography, for the atmosphere was far better sustained by the other scenes where more impressionistic movement was employed, as in the bizarre but not incongruous scene at the rainy funeral, where the umbrella dance between Alexander Grant and Anne Negus was work of genius, and performed magnificently. Again, the same fragile mood was conveyed by the circus scene, distinguished by Kenneth Melville's classical clown, danced with the air of a supernatural harlequin. This scene was complete in itself. I find that in spite of the umbrella scene and its laughter, and in spite of the insignificance of the circus at the time, it is the only scene that I can see again easily in the mind's eye, and its memory gives me more pleasure than any of the others.

The usual practice of Petit is to create the choreography to fit the personalities of his dancers. He does not know the dancers of *Ballabile* as he knows his own company, and possibly where he felt this an obstacle, he decided to make them into what he would like them to be. That the two processes exist together in the making of the ballet is one of its fundamental weaknesses.

Ballabile created a mood that for me was the smile of a summer afternoon's daydream. But next day, when trying to recall and relive the atmosphere, there came instead the realisation that one had been left at last with nothing at all.

Michael Ashlin

DECOR

The face of ballet designing changes rapidly. Not long ago simplification was the order of the day, now the more the stage is filled with bric-a-brac the more successful it appears to be. Clavé is the arch-clutterer. It all started in a minor way when chairs were strewn around in *Los Caprichos;* he went a good deal further in *Carmen* when wheels and elaborate constructions left little room for dancing; in *Ballabile* everything is in the grand manner and looks as though somebody had turned the Albert Hall into a gargantuan junk shop. The result, however, is so exciting that before it all adverse criticism fails. It has the starkness of early Soviet constructivism softened by French chic.

The dancers are first seen through a draped purple gauze with the word "Ballabile" written across it, this is dropped to reveal them at class. Everything has an air of mystery, strange shapes loom out of the blackness. For the river-side scene, a cut cloth is lowered which represents chunky trees, while boats, bicycles and rostrums are littered about each side of the stage. All is cleared for the funeral in the rain, and the full depth of the stage reveals a con-

structed row of shuttered and empty houses.

The atmosphere of the Big Top is wonderfully suggested by three pieces of wide orange canvas suspended from the centre and held up at the bottom by members of the *corps de ballet* standing on rostrums of varying heights. The full depth is again used for the Impressions of Spain; this time the houses, that looked so dark and shuttered previously, have lights blazing from every window against the blue night sky.

It is all very ingenius and some of the costumes are beautiful though everyone who has seen all Clavé's theatre designs will recognize many features that have become *clichés*. His design for a clown is worthy of the great eighteenth century creators of trick-costumes.

Such magnificence needs strong choreography to keep the balance right. As it is now, the eye of the spectator wanders from one scenic detail to another. If ever the ballet is taken out of the repertoire it would be a good idea to hand the scenery over to the Opera company—*Carmen*, for instance, would benefit enormously.

Peter Williams

AN ENGLISHMAN IN THE STALLS

Roland Petit has always offered an excellent target for criticism and doubtless he and *Ballabile* are in for a sound slapping from the pundits.

Even his best work is not invulnerable—too slapdash, too disrespectful with music, too little construction, too much gymnasticism, too much striving after *chic*: but how unimportant all this is compared with the vitality, the invention, the superb sense of theatre, the ability to bring out in a dancer more than anyone else knew was there, the wit, the ability to build a climax that has one sitting on the edge of one's seat with excitement, as Massine used to and no other choreographer but Petit has done since.

In *Ballabile*, not one of his best ballets, all the faults are there in force; this slapdash *divertissement*, lacking all unity save a general tendency to burlesque ballet, suffers sadly from a lack of proportion and a too frequent sense of effort, of striving after effect. By the end the audience were as wearied as the dancers by too much trying for laughs. Certainly there was an attempt at contrast in two would-be lyrical episodes: but the scene by the river failed to come off and Elvin's solo at the end of the "street in the rain" episode suffered from being tacked on to the end of an hilariously funny scene.

But because this is a Petit ballet, the brilliant qualities are still there even though this time they do not predominate. And let us be grateful for them: for Grant's brilliant umbrella dance in the rainy street; for the discovery of a first-rate comedian in Anne Negus: for the chance to see some of our dancers succeeding admirably in a new genre: and for a breath of irreverence and mischief that raised some of the loudest laughs Covent Garden has heard for years.

John Banbury

AN AMERICAN IN THE STALLS

Mr. Petit has shown courage and displayed skill in reproducing an accurate reflection of us —the people. In an attempt to prove that we take ourselves too seriously he has succeeded in consolidating a bond between that section of the ballet-going public who know man's frailties, accepting them lovingly; and in alienating the diehards who cast supercilious glances in the direction of such satire.

Sunday on the river with Philip Chatfield and Violetta Elvin (*Photo: Duncan Melvin*)

Ballabile is, in a sense, a projection of our subconscious, the unravelling of that tight little ball at the base of our brains responsible for inhibitions, complexes, and general neurosis. It is apparent that Mr. Petit has too long been exposed to the effects of the precious "human comedy" and in a good-natured way is trying to discover if we, the public, can take it. The effect of his Steinberg-Saroyanesque, comic-ballet was tonic; it is a statement of our times, and general confusion. I was provided with a long missing perspective on me—the person.

Only when Mr. Petit deviates from his original theme and wanders off into sentimental picnics strewn with bicycles does the ballet become tedious. It is the one false note in the work; a superficial romanticism.

Impressions of Spain by Violetta Elvin and Alexander Grant (*Photo: Duncan Melvin*)

Mr. Petit is to be credited for having set into motion the flexibility of Sadler's Wells dancers. The low comedy and sustained showmanship of Anne Negus was a rewarding theatrical experience.

Clavé consolidates his reputation for being the ballet's most theatrical designer by again providing Petit with décor and costumes which never lose sight of their objective.

. . . THE AMPHITHEATRE

Petit has devised a typical revue to exploit the more acrobatic talents of the company's soloists. It is witty, neat and sometimes elegant, but as so often with Petit's works it degenerates progressively into a featureless romp.

The designs are effective in themselves and have a nostalgic sense of "place" but, perhaps because of the thinness of the choreographic idea they tend to swamp the action. The costumes might have been more pleasing had they been less hackneyed and consciously new.

While the dancers throw themselves into the fun with energy and something more than competence they somehow lack that French *chic* which alone completely brings this kind of thing off and makes it seem justifiable. Violetta Elvin, looking like a painting by a modern Degas, dances with a gay assurance that would be wholly delightful did one not feel her to be wasted.

The Chabrier music is charming, but seems to have little to do with the dance movement.

However, this is a ballet which (in a shortened and revised form) might be a useful addition to the repertoire of a company which did not happen to have the honour of dancing in the Royal Opera House.

Jay Norman

. . . THE GALLERY

Ballabile was presumably intended as a take-off of most of the ballets we and Roland Petit have ever seen, but as a take-off it scarcely begins to leave the ground. Slight misquotations, in some cases so slight that the demarcation line between parody and plagiarism becomes dangerously blurred, abound in this fricassee of Petipa, Ashton, Balanchine, Massine, Petit and possibly even René Clair. Petit's never-ending quest for the original has on this occasion led him to disaster. The no-handed lift at the end of the River scene has an effect as of a duchess swallowing a bicycle, clever but scarcely beautiful, and this is but one example of a regrettable tendency in the choreography. The humour of the work is broad and laboured, with little wit or charm. The ballet has its moments, but not enough to fill thirty minutes. However, even if the intrinsic worth of *Ballabile* is slight, it is of some value to the Sadler's Wells repertory because it does give an opportunity for some splendid dancing, which is superbly taken by its ten dancers. Few choreographers can have been blessed with a better or more enthusiastic cast. The décor by Clavé is pretty, but might it not have been cheaper to have used up the décor and costumes from *Les Sirenes?* Everything is so expensive these days.

Clive Barnes

WINTER NIGHT

First given in England by Ballet Rambert on Tuesday, May 2, 1950, at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. Choreography: Walter Gore. Music: Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto. Costumes: Kenneth Rowell.

Cast :

Paula Hinton — Margaret Hill

Walter Gore

Barbara Grimes, Mary Munro, Angela Sparshott, Audrey Brookes, Mavis Traill, Anne Horen, Pearl Gaden, Margaret Pollen, Cecil Bates, Derek Westlake, Ronald Hynd, Norman Dixon.

(Above) *Robert (Walter Gore): "We have loved, Felice and now . . ."*
Felice (Margaret Hill): "And now"?
Robert: ". . . there comes the parting. Life consists of meeting and parting. How else is it life?"

(Below) *Felice (Margaret Hill): "This parting is the Winter Night of my despair".*
Amiee (Paula Hinton): "It is for me the Bright Summer now beginning".
(Photos: Duncan Melvin)

THE programme note announces that *Winter Night* "is not an abstract ballet, neither is it a ballet of realism. It is a Dance Allegory for three characters, a man and two women . . ." and the note goes on to give a quotation from an un-named source including the sentence "This parting is the Winter Night of my despair".

The allegory, then, is in the form of a lover engaged in the process of casting off an old love for a new, and winds its way in a tortured torrent of action from the obvious to the even more obvious, strung out in excruciating agony of repetition.

That Walter Gore should have chosen the Rachmaninoff C minor piano concerto for this work is a measure of its quality; for this concerto, with its own piercing intensity of sobbing melodic nostalgia, has sharp dramatic contrasts without great musical depth. Gore has seized on these dramatic highlights and turned them to account, ignoring musical structure—weak as it is—and musical content. In other words, *Winter Night* is the work of a mind thinking in dramatic rather than musical terms.

The choreography, in accord with the idea, has a daring breadth of conception, and obviously has been conceived for a space larger than the stage of the Lyric Theatre. You cannot scream effectively in a broom-cupboard; and *Winter Night* is a choreographic cry of pain that needs the echoes of the "dark unfathom'd caves of ocean". But there are moments of great beauty, isolated from the music and from the rest of the repetition of introspection which at times seems interminable.

Kenneth Rowell's costumes are of an indefinite period, apt because of their neutrality, and more elaborate in construction than have been seen on any ballet stages for some time.

Walter Gore dances the central role with a sense of authority, with Margaret Hill as the darkling whose Winter Night is the *nadir* of despair. In the performance on which this review is based the role of the virginal New Love was danced efficiently by Beryl Goldwyn, in the absence through illness of Paula Hinton. The role needs a little more maturity to be fully effective. And the ballet as a whole needs ruthless cutting of its repetitions and a closer association with the more obvious construction of the music.

E. S.

Music . . . . . by EVAN SENIOR

Robbing the grave . .

IN the past, artists of all types expected —and received—the patronage of the aristocracy. To-day, the few remaining aristocrats expect the patronage of artists. This is all very nice for the relative prestige of the two classes, but it is apt to ignore realities and balance. To-day, the big ballet companies, or the State, are the only organisations able to commission new works in the ballet sphere.

The new works are being commissioned, of course. We have had quite a few of them. Mr. So-and-So is going to give us a new ballet; Miss Somebody-else is going to look over her collection of chocolate-box covers and will paste them together to create a new *décor*; Miss—sorry, Mr.—Something is going to draw the frills and furbelows that will look so nice on paper and will tie the legs of the dancers in knots. All at nice fat fees.

And the music? "Oh well, let's try that suite by Popoffski—I'm *sure* it was meant to describe love's young dream. At least, it always makes *me* weep buckets. And anyway, he's been dead for years and we won't have to pay any royalties."

When ballet companies seem to splash so much money about on decorations that are sometimes scrapped before they are used, could not a little be spent on giving some practical encouragement to our many capable composers who could write for ballet? How many new composers have been introduced to the ballet public in the last five years?

Symphony, opera, and other forms of musical work have been raped for the profit of the box-office and to swell the inflated commissions to painters and designers. Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Liszt, César Franck, Berlioz, Offenbach, Strauss, Rossini—all of them long dead and therefore "free"—have contributed to the huge sums paid by the public for admission to British ballet. But what has ballet given back?

Oh yes—Covent Garden has recently given a ballet to an original score, written some years ago, and after a long time of waiting. Constant Lambert's *Horoscope* has been on the shelf for much longer than it deserves. Gerald Berners' witty music is far too sophisticated (or is it?). In the last few years only Ballet Rambert, possibly the least affluent of the permanent British organisations, has given the smallest encouragement to the composer of music.

Music can, and does, exist as an art-form on its own; it does not need ballet. Ballet, on the contrary, needs music, just as much as it needs its dancers, choreographers and designers. For all these things it pays, relatively speaking, handsomely.

Musicians, too, must live. Composers, to be able to write, must have some encouragement; and ballet, which depends so much on music, must provide some of that living, for its own sake as well as for that of the poor composer. Great power implies great responsibility, and such is the box-office draw of ballet to-day that it has great power. It is a field for the composer as well as for the choreographer and the designer. Or perhaps ballet prefers to starve the composer to death and then to wait fifty years for his copyright to expire before robbing his grave?

(Left) *A new photograph of Juriaan Andriessen, the composer of Balanchine's* Jones Beach, *which will be seen at Covent Garden in July. This ballet was the subject of the photo-supplement in our May issue.* (*Photo: Melton Pippin*)

Composer of To-day

JURIAAN ANDRIESSEN, a composer new to British audiences, has written the music for Jones Beach, *new ballet which London will see when New York City Ballet comes to Covent Garden in July.*

Juriaan Andriessen, twenty-five year old Dutch composer, is one of the "white hopes" of modern Netherlands music. Born with a musical background—his father is Willem Andriessen, the well-known director since 1937 of the Amsterdam Conservatorium of Music—Juriaan Andriessen early proved himself as a composer of original ideas and brilliant technique. He had already produced a startling concerto for two pianos without orchestra when, in 1948, at the age of 23, his concerto for piano and orchestra made a world-wide sensation in musical circles and focussed attention on him as one of the coming composers of the present era. He studied at Utrecht with another celebrated Dutch composer, Willem Pijper.

Opera, Ballet and . . . . Samba!

BALLET, in the Continental tradition, has never been very far divorced from opera. In fact, it was the demand for a ballet in opera which caused such a rumpus on the occasion of the first presentation of Tannhäuser *in Paris; for the influential gentlemen of the Jockey Club refused to attend an opera which did not contain a ballet in which their personal favourites could pose or cavort; and Wagner had to write in the special Venusberg music which to-day is still known as the "Paris Version".*

An opera without a ballet is still almost unthinkable in Paris, which is why, when I attended the second performance of Milhaud's new opera, *Bolivar*, at the Paris Opera some weeks ago, I found myself wondering just what form ballet could take in a story of this type.

I was not really prepared for what actually happened, nor for the ingenious manner in which the dancing was introduced. *Bolivar* tells the story of the liberation of the South American states from Spanish rule by the redoubtable Simon Bolivar, and its South American setting is hardly suitable for the more traditional tutu and tights. In addition, it was easy to see from the beginning that the music would have a completeness and flow which could not be arbitrarily interrupted for ballet.

But there came an exciting scene in the first act in which the plantation slaves were given their freedom, and from that, perfectly naturally, grew a climax of ecstatic native dancing which, almost imperceptibly, merged into an indigenous dance—the Brazilian samba. It was the most natural thing in the world, a part of the action, and music and movement swelled to an excited outburst of tense and dramatic dancing.

Obviously it was far from easy to produce such a dance, let alone to make it work smoothly. On the brilliantly coloured Léger set some three hundred people were gathered, most of them, of course, singers. In and through the singers, the dancers had to weave and mingle, never for a moment losing integration with the crowd and becoming a separate entity.

This was a triumph of choreography on the part of Serge Lifar, who managed to merge the authentic dancers with the singers who added to the enormous wave of movement that swept across what is one of the largest stages in the world. Darius Milhaud, whose exciting South American music has so often explored this sphere, had written music which, also, grew naturally from the musical structure of the work. The dance was a perfect medium of expression of the emotion involved in this dramatic moment.

Although this was the only dancing of importance in *Bolivar* as I saw it, I understand that the composer has already decided to make some changes in the first scene of the last act, involving some cuts and the introduction of another ballet. At this point dancing would have an ideal position, for the scene is one of Court grandeur in 1826 and the opportunities are limitless. If the new ballet in the third act falls into place as effortlessly as that in the first it should be something worth seeing—and hearing.

This Paris visit gave me my first chance of seeing the Lifar-Milhaud ballet, *Salade*, in which both dancing and music have the questionable advantage of added spoken dialogue, and which was remarkable for the ebullient work of the young *danseur étoile*, Michel Renault.

Incidentally, it would be a very good thing if the Opera scraped off just one tiny bit of the gold in the foyer, and sold it for some new boarding for the stage. This might save some dancer a possible broken leg. It would certainly help the audience's ears!

. . . . they're just wild about Caryl

Of course we knew it would happen. You cannot be disenchanted with things divine. Many of our readers rose up in their wrath at Caryl Brahms' article in our May issue in which she had her grouse. Below, we publish two of the best replies from supporters of the Divine.

The Big Guns of the New Generation come into play

I AM disenchanted with the divine Miss Brahms. I thought she had the secret of eternal youth and now it seems that with Alfred J. Prufrock she grows old, she grows old! She laments for the snows of yester-year, her sobs break the flow of her epigrams, and she has found the courage of Mr. Beaumont's convictions. But cheer up, Miss Brahms! Ballet is not in such a bad way. Why even now it is breathing, so let us save the wreath or pass it on to Mr. Rank.

Any experience I had of Diaghilev (and this is probably true of a large section of the present audience) would have to have been pre-natal. My taste in ballet was formed by following that of an unrivalled mistress, in the days when a hundred pounds would buy quite a lot on the Black Market, and the ballet came often, but air-raid warnings came oftener.

Miss Brahms' jeremiad seems to be based on three assumptions; the first "That a generation of dancers has arisen that knows not how to interpret Fokine and Massine", then that new artists have not arisen to replace these latter day saints, and lastly that dancers are not what they were.

On the question of the Fokine and Massine revivals, my experience being more or less entirely post-war, I ought to surrender unconditionally, and I almost will. I have enjoyed some of the recent Massine ballets, but am prepared to accept that I would probably have enjoyed them more had I been privileged to see them in the first fresh flush of their original creation. I have never enjoyed a ballet by Fokine.

To test the strength of Miss Brahms' further assertions, and since her disillusion is "of late", let us compare the present-day scene with that in 1938. You had an ageing Fokine, we have his magnificent reputation; you had a Massine who was possibly past his best creative work, so have we; you had Ninette de Valois, Serge Lifar, and David Lichine, so have we; you had Ashton, Balanchine and Tudor at various stages of their maturity, we have them at the height of their powers. We also have Petit to throw damp squibs, Helpmann to set the whole stage walking and a possible aspirant to greatness in Jerome Robbins.

But the dancers, where are the dancers? In 1938 you had Danilova, Markova, Slavenska, the three baby ballerinas and an immature Fonteyn. They are all, with the exception of Baronova, still dancing. Danilova is possibly not quite so magnificent as then, however the general concensus of critical opinion seems to be that she has lost but little in the last decade. Of Markova Mr. Beaumont, among others, found an added poetry on her reappearance. I realise that Miss Brahms considers her part of the "saddest spectacle of all", performing in cinemas, etc. Nevertheless, I saw a week of these sad spectacles at Oxford and can assure anyone that, by the end of the week she and Dolin surpassed anything they achieved at Covent Garden in 1946. Toumanova must have been a much better dancer before the war, but I do not think many would put forward the De Basil babies as great ballerinas at that stage of their development.

The scene is now largely dominated (excluding, of course, Danilova and Markova) by Fonteyn and Hightower. I have always considered *ballerina assoluta* to be a meaningless term outside Russia and I cannot pretend to be an authority on the grandeur of MissFonteyn's soul, but to me she is a great ballerina. She has faults, more perhaps than would be credited from a casual perusal of contemporary criticism, but although I am unable to compare her with the past, she will always be a yardstick with which I shall measure the future. Of Elvin's ultimate greatness I have never been in any serious doubt and to the list of to-day's dancers to compare with those of 1938 I would add Grey, Vyroubova and Chauviré. Miss Brahms claims that the standard of present-day soloists is far below the pre-war level, but while neither of us can prove or disprove this, it should be pointed out that her view is by no means universal.

I am not living in such a fool's paradise that I can persuade myself that all is well in the present ballet microcosm, but the faults are not those enumerated by Miss Brahms. Our main difficulty to-day is that we have little space or time for experiment. We desperately need an organisation like the American Choreographers' Workshop to try out new ideas, choreographers, designers, composers and dancers, and so prevent really promising talents, like those of Jack Carter and Alfred Rodrigues, from going to waste. From both inside and outside the Sadler's Wells companies it is becoming increasingly difficult for young artists to get an opportunity either to prove themselves or to justify their consignment into oblivion. This situation is grave and something should be done.

One of the great sources of the strength of modern ballet is its large audience, but unfortunately the critical standards of that audience are not uniformly high. Furthermore, these standards, while led by the abysmal gibberish of ballet journalism which passes as criticism in almost all our National newspapers, are unlikely to get any higher. The pre-eminence of ballet stars over choreographers is another disquieting trend.

These are three first symptoms of incipient sickness. This sickness can be avoided by courage and enterprise on the part of managements, a willingness to learn and experiment on the part of the audience and more sense on the part of the critics. The organism called ballet is healthier than it was in 1938 or 1928, but it is also in a more critical condition than in those years. The situation is not helped by sighs of "Those were the days", or even by sad little traveller's tales of men who went six times to the Opera House and failed to find perfection.

Clive Barnes.

. . supported by those of an older one

To one who, even in middle age, has preserved his illustions on ballet intact, Miss Caryl Brahms' *cri du coeur* must seem touching rather than alarming. Seeking the cause of her lost enthusiasm she asks a number of specific questions, some of which, uninhibited as I am by any particular knowledge of the subject, I can answer with perfect confidence.

Has ballet, she asks in essence, changed since the days of Diaghilev? Of course it has: being alive, it must. Has it lost its power to evoke in its more sensitive devotees the "wonder and wild excitement" she now so bitterly misses? A visit to the Gallery at almost any ballet performance will convince her that it has not. Does she have too much ballet? For her own sustained appreciation; yes. For the exercise of her professional duty to the ballet companies and the public; No. Does Miss Brahms grow old? Naturally.

Her condition is a sad one, being easy to diagnose, but difficult to treat. For her, the youthful craving for aesthetic beauty of the more romantic sort was magnificently and unforgettably satisfied by the Russian ballet. With such an experience comes a feeling of personal discovery and possession, a sense of pride as well as joy. "Nothing" she says with determination "can ever be as good as *my* ballet". But her ballet dies, flickers into half-life for a few more years and is gone. A new era arrives, an astonishing renaissance of English ballet, but Miss Brahms is unmoved.

Not only has she become, in the interval, more mature, less prone in any case to react emotionally to aesthetic stimuli, but there is resentment of the new comers, of every departure from the Diaghilev manner, and of any attempt to reproduce it, which shows in almost every line she writes.

And yet, so much has she, and the cultural "climate" of our times changed, that if she were to witness to-day a performance of a complete Diaghilev company, miraculously resurrected and unrecognised, I predict that her printed comments to-morrow would be no less harsh than those she pours on the unfortunate English.

And what of the ballet itself? Having only seen those last flickerings of the Russian era, who am I to compare it with the era of Sadler's Wells? I only know that I and many like me have watched our ballet germinate and grow to its present incomparable flowering with the same feelings of pride and joy that I have ascribed to Miss Brahms. We observe, without surprise, that when our company visits foreign cities, it receives a critical acclamation that Diaghilev would have been proud to receive.

Our necessarily infrequent visits to Covent Garden are anticipated for weeks, and enjoyed as much as we deserve to enjoy anything on this wicked old planet. I, personally, would not exchange *Symphonic Variations* for a whole platoon of fauns, sylphs, or spectres, and I challenge Miss Brahms and her resurrected Russians to produce any of the full length ballets as well as we do. As for the dancers, we are charmed and delighted by their genius and, of course, we have our favourites, but it is the company as a whole and the organisation we perceive behind it that really holds our admiration. I only wish that Miss Brahms could enjoy it as we do.

Angletomane

Next month we hope that well-armed Battle Cruiser, Caryl Brahms, will answer with a few deadly salvos. After that all fire must cease and the various craft return unescorted to Port.

Dancers you should know . . .

ANITA PHILLIPS

HAVE you ever talked to a time bomb? It's like that with Anita Phillips; long, ticking silences followed by sudden explosion of ideas, plans and ambitions simmering down to a profound, rational discussion of art, music, poetry and philosophy. One frequently sees her hurrying along to the West Street dance studios with a bag of practice clothes in one hand and a volume of poems by T. S. Eliot in the other; or mysteriously huddled together with a group of out of work actors sipping black coffee and discussing the pros and cons of new plays in the West End, at Le Grain's Coffee House in Gerrard Street.

Being a dancer is no sign of limitations to Anita; she has written poetry, scenarios for musicals and sings popular ballads of her own composition. Her dancing has a vitality that makes many male dancers turn green; yet she is feminine to a point of chic. Not embarrassed by her weakness for men, she has long discovered that *love* is for the leisure class and not for girls with ambition.

Anita's first recorded blast of cynicism was on May 5, 1927, when the pediatrician slapped her little bottom for comment. She was indeed a surprise to Elsa Bideleux and Ellery Phillips who were expecting either a boy or girl.

It is hardly likely that excitement was lacking in the lives of Ellery Phillips, a self-made man from Adelaide, Australia, or Elsa Bideleux who broke the rules of Swedish aristocracy by marrying him; but neither, in their wildest dreams, had anticipated Anita.

The irregularities of her early childhood makes a better story than "Journey for Margaret", and explain to some extent—Anita. For ten years she was trundled around the major cities of the Far East. Her education was left haphazardly to chance by a father who was terribly busy as personal physician to the Sultan of Johore and a distraught mother who had to cope with a new household at regular intervals. Except for a brief visit home to Adelaide in 1937, Anita had never lived in an all white community. It also explains Anita's nocturnal flight from a Convent in Troddos, Cyprus the following year. A nightmarish experience for a ten-year old, she ran through three miles of forest, eluded the Cypriot police and was eventually restored to her bewildered family.

Traces of madness in children so young are naturally worrying to parents. Any further attempt at formal education, or regimentation for Anita might have proved fatal, so Elsa Phillips resolutely shipped her daughter to a family plantation in Famagusta, where she lived the undisciplined life of a native.

Nothing more was said of formal education until the autumn of 1939 when she spent a havoc-making six weeks at the fashionable Oak-Dean school in Beaconsfield. It was just one expulsion too many for Elsa Bideleux Phillips; leaving a trail of humiliations behind her, she headed East with Anita to join her husband in Jerusalem. With the outbreak of the El Alamein onslaught in 1943 Anita was evacuated to Cape Town, South Africa, for six months.

The war, plus the fact that Anita was growing up, had a sobering effect on her. She was no longer the irresponsible, rash child in a Cypriot convent but a serious, poised young lady, curious and eager to orient herself to a Western society from which she had so long been alienated.

She developed an appetite for reading, became an avid theatre-goer and regular at the ballet. One day she decided that ballet dancing was for her. A fifteen minute improvisation entitled *Gentleman Thief* convinced Ailne Philips of the Sadler's Wells School, that here was a unique talent. For two years she pulled and stretched at the *barre*, surrendering to a discipline that formerly incited rebellion.

Her efforts were not in vain; for when the Czech Sascha Machov, came to Sadler's Wells to produce the *Bartered Bride* he selected her to dance one of three clowns in the ballet—the others were Brian Shaw and Philip Chatfield. Flushed by the success of her first dancing role, Anita left the Sadler's Wells School to join the company of *Gay Rosalinda*. She soon found Viennese waltzes wrong for her and at the end of three weeks checked out, committing herself to a tour of Italy in the Fortune Ballet Company. She passed through the hands of Katerine Devillier who created for her the role of the Young Girl in *American in Paris*; did some character dancing in Gzovsky's *Dances of Galanta* and the leading role in Andrée Howard's *Lizst Concerto*.

There followed a brief respite from dancing when she contracted jaundice in Italy. Three months later she returned to London and joined the Metropolitan Ballet as soloist.

Here, Michael Kidd, the American choreographer, saw her and offered her a job in *Finian's Rainbow*. At the conclusion of that ill-fated musical, she was given a conspicuous role in the Under 30 Club's *Sunday Night Revue* in which she sang, acted and danced. Her performance prompted the *Daily Express*

continued on page twenty-two

Touch and Go *is a revue at the Prince of Wales and was imported from America, by Prince Littler, with most of the original cast. It is notable as a display counter for showing what dancers can do in addition to dancing.*

Helen Galagher, Mary Anthony, David Lober and Jonathan Lucas head the company of dancers. Other dancers are Tamara Kirova, Barbara Pearce, Eleanor Fazan, Mary Montgomery, Roy Marshall, Howard Ludwig, James Barron and Gordon West.

Helen Tamiris, who arranged the dances for Annie Get Your Gun, *is responsible for the choreography. The dancing for* The Little Bar Off Times Square *was arranged by Mary Anthony. The dancing in* Touch and Go *will be reviewed in the August number of* Dance and Dancers.

On the left the Debonairs, *tap dancing humorists in a number called* Shore Leave, *a satire on U.S. Navy discipline.* (*Photo: Landseer*)

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

The long season of the SADLER'S WELLS BALLET at Covent Garden ends on Saturday, July 8. A season which has been notable for the emergence of Elvin, the considerable rise in standard of male dancing, and *Ballet Imperial*. Fonteyn has found new brilliance and *équilibre*. Grey, after a long illness, returned triumphantly in the Balanchine ballet. Otherwise the dancing as a whole has been undistinguished and on occasions very bad. The company appeared tired when they opened after the American tour and have never fully regained their strength.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET opens on July 10; the programme on that night will probably be Balanchine's *Orpheus* and *Symphony in C*, Jerome Robbins' *Age of Anxiety*. The other ballets to be seen during their six weeks season include *Firebird*, *Bourée Fantasque*, *Mother Goose Suite*, *Prodigal Son*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Symphonie Concertante*, *Four Temperaments*, *Jones Beach*, *The Duel*, *Illuminations*, *Serenade*, *Divertimento*, *Pas de Deux Romantique* and *Jinx*. Principal dancers are Maria Tallchief, Janet Reed, Tanaquil LeClercq, Melissa Hayden, Lois Ellyn, Beatrice Tompkins. The male dancers include Nicholas Magallanes, Francisco Moncion, Herbert Bliss, Jerome Robbins, Todd Bolender, Lew Christiensen and Frank Hobi.

★

On Saturday, May 20, the SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET gave their last performance in their own theatre before starting their summer tour. The programme included the best new works of the season—*Beauty and the Beast*, *El Destino* and *Summer Interlude*—and Svetlana Beriosova's first performance with the Company.

Originally she was not to have danced until the first week of the tour, but owing to Fifield's illness she made her début in the second act of *Swan Lake*. She gave a beautiful and lyrical performance, using her whole body from her fingertips to her toes. She appeared to be slightly nervous and her interpretation quiet rather than brilliant.

Fifield who is ill will be unable to dance for some months. Her place has been taken on tour by Nadia Nerina from Covent Garden.

★

Julian Algo's *Visions* was given its first London performance by INTERNATIONAL BALLET at the Coliseum on Thursday, May 11.

The ballet falls into three parts—The Fall of the Virgin, Visions of the Past, and Conclusion. The music consisted of fragments from Moussorgsky's works sandwiched between his *Night on a Bare Mountain*.

The story was obscure and Algo has said that it could be interpreted as you will; but sex plays a very important part. This is the kind of ballet that Nijinska did in the 'twenties and everyone else has done at concert performances ever since. Curious that International should have chosen it, but if it did little else it revealed that the company has some very fine dancers whose qualities have never been fully shown in their full-length classics. Particularly good were Mona Inglesby as Soul, Algeranova as Virgin, Armfelt as Lascivious, Bejart as Red, and Zloch as Adventurer.

The choreography is hard and intense with a good deal of head-clutching; the *corps de ballet* are continually in lines or huddled groups. The scenery, designed by Algo, must have some inner-meaning never clear to the audience. It won the first prize in the International Ballet Competition in Stockholm in 1945 which causes one to ponder on the rest of the entries.

On Tuesday, May 23, Massine's *Gaité Parisienne* was revived for the first time in this country since the war.

The most notable event of the season at Covent Garden—Balanchine's Ballet Imperial. *In the* pas de trois *from the first movement are Kenneth Macmillan, Beryl Grey and John Field*
(*Photo: Roger Wood*)

As every repertoire should have a Massine ballet, this was the most suitable that International could choose as it is certain to be popular everywhere.

These high-jinks in a Paris café were never, at their best with Danilova and Slavenska, more than the froth on top of French beer (a beverage with little body). Today even the beer seems an excessively long flat draught. Perhaps this was due to the fact that it was under-rehearsed on the first night and an improvement can be expected.

Mona Inglesby's glove-seller, though having little to do with Paris, was very well danced. Three foreign dancers as Billiard Players–Zloch, Bejart and Holmgren were outstanding. The famous can-can which even before the war seemed tame in comparison to the girls of the Bal Tabarin now completely lacks the nonchalant naughtiness that is essential. It needs a style completely of its own which the English girls could never achieve in spite of the fact that they work very hard.

However to those who never saw the original productions this must all appear gay and high-spirited. But who can have had the fanciful idea of attributing the costumes and scenery to "after Winterhalter"? The painter of French second-Empire society would never have used this collection of charwomen, cocodettes, cocottes and can-can girls for models. The setting and some of the costumes closely resembled the designs by Comte Etienne de Beaumont for the original production. But never quite closely enough.

★

The great American dancer MARTHA GRAHAM is at last to appear in London. She is to give a season at the Piccadilly Theatre, starting on July 17. With her will be Erick Hawkins, May O'Donnell, Pearl Lang and Helen McGehee. The repertoire will include Graham's *Letter to the World*, *Deaths and Entrances*, *Dark Meadow*, *Cave of the Heart*, *Diversion of Angels*, *Herodiade*, *El Penitente*, *Frontier*, *Every Soul is a Circus*, *Night Journey*, *Eye of Anguish*, *Errand into the Maze*, *Appalachian Spring* and two of Mr. Hawkins' works, *John Brown* and *Stephen Acrobat*.

★

Letty Littlewood's AMBASSADOR BALLET follow Ballet Rambert at the Sarah-Bernhardt Theatre in Paris. The repertoire will include Littlewood's *The Door* and *Images;* Hyrst's *Drawn Blinds* and *Dawns Mens;* Edward Lane's *Down Beat;* Jack Carter's *Stagione;* a new work by Anthony Burke called *Symphony for Fun* to music by Don Gilles, the American composer; and *Sappho* by Frances James. The company will remain in Paris for about six weeks and then they may embark on a long continental tour.

★

Some of the dancers who will appear in the film *Happy Go Lovely*, now being made at Elstree Studios, and starring Vera-Ellen, are Peter Warrick, Graham McCormack (both of the musical *Oklahoma*), Tony Repetski, Ian Stewart, David Davenport and possibly Rolf Alexander former Jooss dancer who is being sought as partner for Vera-Ellen.

★

The Ballet Montmartre is currently touring the provinces in a double decker bus equipped for carrying the company's décor, costumes and dancers. The company consists of twenty-four dancers and was created as an outlet for the multiple talents of its members, who are encouraged by the management to present ideas for new ballets, do choreography, design sets and costumes and to learn the technical end of production.

The classics in the repertoire are, *Coppelia Act II*, *Swan Lake Act II*, *Variations from Aurora's Wedding* and *Les Sylphides*. Among

the new works are *Divertissements*, *Bridal Suite*, with choreography by Marco Ranova, *Rhapsodie Hongroise*, with choreography by Catherine Devilliet, *Apache*, a ballet in three scenes by Andrée Andreovna and Eric de Paul, *Voodoo* and *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* by Lander Moore formerly with the Ballet Negre.

In the company are, Denise Hirst, Andrée Andreovna, Jessie Webb, Monica Rey, Sheila O'Neal, Patricia Riley, Barbara Pierce, Roma Heritage, Jean Lanceman, Jessica Lindsey, Joanne Stewart, Elisabeth Makin, Margaret Watson, Joan Boyd, Muriel Carson, Eric de Paul, Leon Czerny, John Williamson, Phillip Casson, and Lander Moore.

Jacques St. Martine (Musical Director) and Margaret Crockett play piano accompaniment and Ranceford Boi the tom-toms for Lander Moore. Arthur Piper and Roger Robilliard have provided the décor.

★

The International Faculty of Arts after being dormant during the war and immediate post-war years is now being revived. The first section to get under way will be the Dancing Section. Before the war the I.F.A. had its own club and headquarters at the Princes Galleries in Piccadilly where many professional shows were given. A number of prominent dancers were members and recitals for visiting artistes, lectures and ballets were given from time to time. A Committee has now been formed which will advise the Council of the Faculty on future activities. The following are the members of this Committee: M. Leon Fiori (Chairman), Mme. Anna Severskaya, Mrs. Olive Ripman, Miss Grace Cone, Mme. Anna Ivanova, Miss Marjorie Davies, Miss Shelagh Elliott-Clarke, Miss Joan Lawson, Miss Doreen Austin, Mr. A. V. Coton, Mr. Drew Hardie, Mr. Sigurd Leeder, Mr. Alan Carter. General Secretary and Organiser is Mr. G. P. Catchpole.

Temporary headquarters are at 14, Clarges Street, W.1.

★

Highlight of the Markova-Dolin gala performances at the Royal Albert Hall (June 26-July 1) will be Frederick Ashton's *La Peri* (Dukas) which he has created especially for them. The first performance of this new work will be on Friday, June 30. The costumes are by Oliver Messel.

The programme for the six performances are as follows: Mon. and Tues., June 26-27, *Swan Lake* (Tchaikovsky), *Bolero* (Ravel), *Casse Noisette* (Tchaikovsky), *Dying Swan* (Saint-Saens), *Les Sylphides* (Chopin), *Les Facheaux* (Auric); Wed. and Thurs., June 28-29, *Bolero*, *Firebird* (Stravinsky), *Nightingale* (Stravinsky), *Dying Swan*, *Casse Noisette*; Fri. and Sat., June 30-July 1, *Casse Noisette*, *House Party* (Poulenc), *Swan Lake*, *Bolero*, *Beloved One* (Schubert-Liszt), *Dying Swan* and *La Peri* (World Premiére).

Leighton Lucas will conduct the London Symphony Orchestra with Robert Zeller as Guest Conductor. Oliver Messel will design special décor for these performances.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

Planned to have its premiére this month at the PARIS OPERA, Serge Lifar's new ballet, *Phèdre*, is apparently to revive Lifar's predilection for the classical Greek in story and presentation. A fleeting glimpse of a rehearsal in the high-up Rotonde of the Opera House gave some faint idea of the economical choreography which Lifar is using, making play with classical pose and use of the "sixth position" that Lifar himself has "invented". At the rehearsal, Toumanova was going through tortured choreography in the title role, with Nina Vyroubova as the Nurse.

Phèdre is to have settings by Cocteau and music (heard only on the rehearsal piano on this occasion) by Georges Auric.

★

A Paris correspondent writes:

Moira Shearer made an unfortunate mistake when she accepted Roland Petit's invitation to go to Paris to replace the injured Renée Jeanmaire in the BALLETS DE PARIS production of *Carmen*. Individual as a character Carmen may be, but not as a role; the passionate gipsy is so much a part of the ballet that Miss Shearer stood out as some extraneous being from another world. Her performance was good dancing—in fact, it could hardly be faulted; but it came nowhere near to even scratching the surface of the uninhibited human animal which is the Carmen of Roland Petit's ballet version. Shearer's intensity was an acted intensity, obviously acted even though well acted, and she died at the end with the same virginal integrity which she had shown throughout the performance. Such a quality is admirable in some roles, but hardly in the spitfire Carmen who is the centre of this blazing mime-ballet. French audiences who thronged the Marigny Theatre for the series of performances applauded more from traditional politeness than from any sense of having been moved.

★

After five years of very vital life, Les BALLETS DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES have closed down. There was a disagreement in the company on account of the proposed lengthy trip to Australia, New Zealand and America and most of the principal dancers left. Every person in the world who has an interest in ballet is saddened by this news. In England particularly they always were sure of a warm welcome, they were the first of our foreign visitors after the war and they always had pride of place. More than anything else that happened after the war, they helped us to realise that five years of horror cannot kill beauty and creation; above all they were a complete reflection of their native country, which is what all art should be. Next month Peter Williams will write about this company which he saw continually from their very first performance in this country and whom he got to know personally over the years eventually becoming their Press Representative in England.

Jean Cocteau fitting the costume on Tamara Toumanova for the eagerly awaited production of Phèdre *at the Paris Opera* (*Photo: Lido*)

U. S. A.

Representatives of Ballet Theatre have signed with David Webster for a season at Covent Garden from August 28 to September 16. The company, in America at the moment, will be flown to Europe for a five months' tour of the continent starting with a month's tour of the continent starting with a month's engagement in Germany on July 15. The tour will be in the following order: The Edinburgh Festival, London, The Venice Festival, tour of Italy, Paris, Belgium and Holland. They will then fly back to America about Dec. 1.

Blevins Davis (President of Ballet Theatre Foundation) in association with A.N.T.A. (American National Theatre and Academy) with the co-operation of the U.S. State Department will present the company to Europe.

The company will consist of sixty people and will have twenty ballets in the repertoire. Nora Kaye, Igor Youskevitch, Hugh Laing, John Kriza and Diana Adams will head the company.

★

Now that the co-directors of Ballet Theatre, Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith, have signed with Rudolph Bing, new General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, opera-ballet should have a new lease of life. Under the terms of the contract Ballet Theatre will direct all ballet operations at the Metropolitan next season.

Under this new arrangement the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School will function under the direction of Ballet Theatre. B.T. will also select the Opera Ballet's principal dancers and members of its corps de ballet of 36, supervise their training and provide choreography for nineteen operas in which ballet is incidental, next season.

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The finale (Auto da fé) episode from Herbert Ross' new ballet, Caprichos, *for Ballet Theatre. The photograph shows Peter Gladke, Eric Braun and Mary Burr. Ross was* Dance and Dancers *American correspondent and this ballet, first given by Choreographer's Workshop, was one of the hits of the recent New York season*
(Photo: Eileen Darby)

U. S. A.—*contd.*

at Covent Garden. This new agreement in no way affects Ballet Theatre as an independent company.

Antony Tudor will be resident Choreographer of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and will create new opera ballets. He will also be in charge of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School with Margaret Craske, Ballet Mistress of Ballet Theatre, as assistant. Agnes de Mille and Jerome Robbins will be guest choreographers.

Nana Gollner, ballerina from Texas who was an original member of Ballet Theatre (1940) will be ballerina of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet.

★

Response to the announcement of SADLER'S WELLS BALLET season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York from September 10 to October 1 amounted to more than $100,000 (about £30,000) in mail orders in the first week. The announcement was made early in April by Sol Hurok, American impressario for Sadler's Wells Ballet. Capacity for the three-week season at the Metropolitan Opera House is $300,000 (about £90,000).

The nine ballets to be included in the company's repertoire are *Scènes de Ballet*, *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, *Les Patineurs*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Checkmate*, *Façade* and *A Wedding Bouquet*.

★

BORIS ROMANOFF has relinquished his post as choreographer for the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and signed as ballet master for La Scala in Milan.

Mr. Romanoff, in addition to arranging dances for opera, will create separately for the ballet. In consideration is a ballet to three Rossini overtures tentatively called *Rossiniana*.

★

The DE CUEVAS BALLET has signed for a New York season beginning November 3 at the Winter Garden. Following this engagement a tour of the major American cities has been outlined to include Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. The company will then proceed to Mexico where a season has been arranged.

SPAIN

NATHAN BAKER, American dancer who has been with the de Cuevas company for the last three years, has left that company and will return to America. A member of the Marquis de Cuevas' Ballet International in 1944, Mr. Baker joined the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo in June, 1947.

★

ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY who sprained his ankle during a performance in Monte Carlo is still unable to dance. George Skibine who is dancing with a bad foot has taken over some of his roles, the rest are being danced by two newcomers to the company, Serge Golovine, formerly of the Paris Opera and John Gilpin, English dancer. Eglevsky will probably be well enough to dance with the company in Madrid.

★

DAVID LICHINE has done his version of *Jeux* to Debussey music, for the de Cuevas company. This ballet was originally created by Nijinsky in 1913, to the same score.

★

ROSELLA HIGHTOWER, ballerina of the de Cuevas company, is creating a sensation in Spain with her new, white Jaguar automobile.

★

GEORGE SKIBINE and MARJORIE TALLCHIEF have bought a house in Eze, near Monte Carlo, which they intend to renovate as soon as they get some free time. Considering the ambitious tour ahead of them they may have to wait quite a while.

ITALY

A correspondent writes:—

THE FLORENCE MUSIC FESTIVAL got off to a bad start with a four-day postponement due to several mishaps including an emergency operation on Babiari who was to have opened the season in the title role of Spontini's *Olympia*; also, a minor motor cycle crash involving Skouratoff and some of the *corps de ballet*.

The season finally opened on May 11 with Lully's *Armide*, an opera-ballet in four acts with décor by Clerici, costumes by Lepri, and production by Miloss. The only way to produce this outmoded art form in the theatre is by judicious pruning and the addition of as much movement as will join up the arias and set dances into an appealing whole, for there is no dramatic action. The production was irritating and boring in spite of some magnificent singing. It was all too formal and the alternation of aria-dance-aria-dance gave the impression that the singers and dancers were trying to outdo each other. The settings were extremely good and bridged the gap between baroque-roman and modern theatre. The costumes were less happy and in many cases an unfortunate mixture of periods varying from Roman to Folies Bergére. Musically the opera is poor, lacking in inspiration, a formal shell, with the exception of a fine *passacaglia* at the end of the act four, the purity and simplicity of which was breathtaking; in spite of the colourful décor, an air of nakedness prevailed.

Only one of the dancers leaves a lasting impression—that for the two spirits of Hell danced by Mary-Edith Cornelius and Christienn Claudel, the former dancing with remarkable expressiveness. Maria Dalba has a slim brittleness well suited to her Dresden china shepherdess role, she danced with Skouratoff, who with little dancing to do, managed to create a character out of nothing. Danilo Berniak danced well in a poorly arranged solo dressed in an even more poorly designed costume.

Spontini's *Olympia* had its first performance on Sunday, May 14. Never before can such bad sets and costumes have accompanied such magnificent singing. There is a half hour of classical ballet in the first act and another half hour in the third act, the locale of which is in ancient Greece. For any choreographer to have to produce a classical ballet to early 19th century music with the dancers all in Greek costumes is a cruel task.

Chout was premiéred on Tuesday, May 16. The greater part of this ballet was created at breakneck speed in under five days—on Monday the dancers worked from 10 a.m., until 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, and then from 12 a.m. until 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday evening with short breaks for meals. A considerable part of the third scene was improvised by Skouratoff and the six jesters with no little success. *Chout* is a ballet in seven scenes to music written by Prokofieff in 1915. Diaghilev produced it in the 1920's. The original scenario has been adhered to with the exception of a few minor alterations. It is a *gauche* Russian ballet with a broad sense of humour and a naive story involving a jester, his wife, a foolish merchant, six buffoons and their wives and children, and a great deal of simple deception on the part of everyone. Skouratoff had a role which suited him down to the ground, he danced well and with none of his usual petulance. Mario Dalba as his wife was equally good. The opening scene between the jester and his wife had a sharp clear-cut quality which was charming and from then on the ballet developed well.

It is unfair to attempt to criticise the latter part of the ballet. No human being can possibly be expected to produce a four act opera-ballet, two half-hour ballets, and a fifty minute ballet in one month and not be dead tired at the end of it. Perhaps one day Miloss will be able to finish *Chout* at leisure, in which case something brilliant may materialise.

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET at COVENT GARDEN

JUNE
27 *Les Patineurs, Dante Sonata, Don Quixote.*
28 *Les Patineurs, Dante Sonata, Don Quixote.*
30 *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Helpmann).

JULY
1 *Wedding Bouquet, Don Quixote, Facade.*
3 *Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Field).
4 *Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Helpmann).
5 (Matinee) *Sleeping Beauty* (Grey, Hart).
5 (Evening) *Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Helpmann).
6 *Les Sylphides, Wedding Bouquet, Ballabile.*
7 *Les Sylphides, Tricorne, Ballabile.*
8 (Matinee) *Tricorne, Ballabile, Ballet Imperial.*
8 (Evening) Last performance of the season. *Ballabile, Tricorne, Ballet Imperial.*

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET ON TOUR

Repertoire includes—*Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Casse Noisette* (Act 2), *Les Sylphides, Selina, Summer Interlude, Haunted Ballroom, Facade, Beauty and the Beast, Sea Change, El Destino, Tritsch-Tratsch, Jota Toledana, Giselle pas de deux, Bluebird pas de deux.*

JULY
3 The Opera House, Cheltenham.
10 The Open Air Theatre, Finsbury Park.
Re-Open at Sadler's Wells Theatre on September 18.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET at COVENT GARDEN

JULY
10 *Serenade, Age of Anxiety, Symphony in C.*
11 *Serenade, Age of Anxiety, Symphony in C.*
12 (Matinee) *Serenade, Age of Anxiety, Symphony in C.*
12 (Evening) *Serenade, Age of Anxiety, Symphony in C.*
13 *Jinx, Firebird, Bourree Fantasque.*
13 *Jinx, Firebird, Bourree Fantasque.*
15 (Matinee) *Jinx, Firebird, Bourree Fantasque.*
15 (Evening) *Jinx, Firebird, Bourree Fantasque.*
17 *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Bourree Fantasque.*
18 *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Bourree Fantasque.*
19 (Matinee) *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Bourree Fantasque.*
19 (Evening) *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Bourree Fantasque.*
20 *Serenade, Illuminations, Firebird.*
21 *Age of Anxiety, Illuminations, Symphony in C.*
22 (Matinee) *Serenade, Illuminations, Firebird.*
22 (Evening) *Age of Anxiety, Illuminations, Symphony in C.*
24 *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Jones Beach.*
25 *Jinx, Firebird, Jones Beach.*
26 (Matinee) *Symphonie Concertante, Orpheus, Jones Beach.*
26 (Evening, at 8.15 p.m.) *Jinx, Firebird, Jones Beach.*
27 *Mother Goose Suite, The Prodigal Son, Symphony in C.*
28 *Firebird, The Prodigal Son, Jones Beach.*
29 (Matinee) *Mother Goose Suite, The Prodigal Son, Symphony in C.*
29 (Evening) *Firebird, The Prodigal Son, Jones Beach.*
31 *Serenade, The Guests, Bourree Fantasque.*

AUGUST
1 *Serenade, The Guests, Bourree Fantasque.*
2 (Matinee) *Concerto Barocco, Age of Anxiety, Bourree Fantasque.*
2 (Evening) *Concerto Barocco, Age of Anxiety, Bourree Fantasque.*
3 *The Guests, Pas de Deux Romantique, Divertimento, Illuminations.*
4 *Concerto Barocco, Divertimento, Pas de Deux Romantique, Illuminations.*
5 (Matinee) *The Guests, Pas de Deux Romantique, Divertimento, Jones Beach.*
5 (Evening) *Mother Goose Suite, Illuminations, Symphony in C.*

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

JULY
3 St. Ives, Cornwall.
13 Penzance, Cornwall.
21 Theatre Royal, Exeter.
31 The Royal Hall, Harrogate.

AUGUST
7 The New Theatre, Hull.

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Erick Hawkins, leading male dancer of the Martha Graham Company, in El Penitente
(Photo: Barbara Morgan)

Clubs

BRISTOL

Bristol Ballet Club (Sec.: Mrs. S. Bain, 1 Greville Road, Bristol, 3).

Donald Britton, by special permission of the Covent Garden Opera Trust, appeared as guest artiste in the club's Annual Production on April 29. Mr. Britton began his training in Bristol and was a charter member of the club. The three ballets presented were, *A Military Affaire*, with choreography by ballet-mistress Dorothy Woods, *A Classical Suite to Chopin's Noctourne in D Flat*, choreography of Kathleen Maddocks and *Vana* with choreography by Doreen Allen. The performance was honoured by the attendance of the Lord Mayor of Bristol.

On May 13 Noble Paullickpulle lectured on dances of Ceylon. Dorothy Woods, the club's ballet-mistress, and some of the members gave a lecture-demonstration at the International Club in Bristol, in June.

A coach trip has been arranged to visit the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in Cheltenham, this month.

HAMPSTEAD

The Hampstead Ballet Club (Dir.: Beryl Paul, 70 Heath St., Hampstead, N.W.3).

During the first week of the Hampstead Festival (June 9 and 10) members of the Hampstead Ballet Club appeared in a production of the Dramatic Society entitled *Uranium* 235, by Evan MacCole. The ballet was entitled *Atomic Fission*.

The following week on June 16 and 17 they presented *Spanish Interlude* with choreography by Consuelo Carmona. Both programmes were given at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead.

The Junior Group will present a programme of ballet at a charity garden party on Mount Tyndal, Hampstead Heath, for the Zionist Babies Home.

LONDON

The London Ballet Circle (Sec.: Stanley W. Hawkins, 47 Ashchurch Grove, London, W12).

On June 18, members attended a lecture given by Ninette de Valois, their Honorary President, at the Salle Erard in Great Marlborough St. George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein will lecture on "The Work of the New York City Ballet," on July 16.

Jack Carter, dancer and choreographer, is currently giving classes.

ISLE OF MAN

The Manx Ballet Club (Dir.: Monica Mudie, Wateredge, Beach Road, Port St. Mary, Isle of Man).

The Manx Ballet Club, founded two years ago by its director, Monica Mudie, consists of members all under the age of 17. Last winter they performed at the Gaiety Theatre in Douglas and in Ramsey in the North of the Island. The programme on both occasions was *The Ugly Duckling*, a ballet in three scenes based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, *The Legend of Sennen Cove* and *Les Rendezvous*. The choreography was by Monica Mudie.

WIMBLEDON

The Wimbledon Ballet Club (Sec.: Geoffrey Lance, 61 Ridgeway Place, S.W. 19).

In May the members of the club enjoyed a piano recital by Miss Dorothy Diment at The Studio. Works of Beethoven and Mozart were played.

ANITA PHILLIPS — *contd.*

critic to announce a "great discovery" and this probably influenced Lee Ephraim in selecting her for the role of "the urchin" in his *Carrissima*. Eighteen months of hard work in the show indicated a three months rest in Cannes.

Last March she arranged the dances for the touring company of *Carrissima*. The end of April was spent in Dublin where she choreographed and danced in the Dublin Grand Opera Society's productions of *Aida* and *Carmen*. The Irish, who were expecting a modified version of Margot Fonteyn, are still recovering from the shock of a ballerina with an "urchin" haircut.

She is now appearing in the new Benthall-Helpmann musical about Australia in the 'eighties, *Golden City*.

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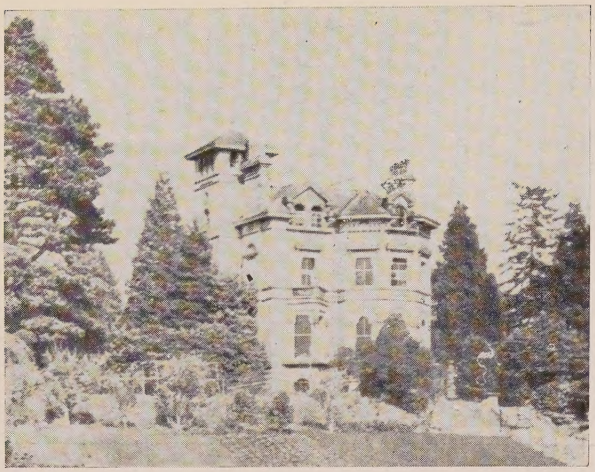

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